IN THE CLAIMS

1. (original) A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient a therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin in association with a therapeutically effective amount of pegylated interferon alfa protein for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin administered is from about 800 mg to about 1400 mg per day.

3. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin administered is about 800 mg/day, about 1000 mg/day or about 1200 mg per day.

4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is selected from the group consisting of interferon alfa-2a, interferon alfa-2b, interferon alfa-2c, interferon alfa n-1, interferon alfa n-3 and consensus interferon.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is pegylated interferon alfa-2a or pegylated interferon alfa-2b.

9. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa that is administered is a pegylated interferon alfa-2b and wherein the amount of pegylated interferon alfa-2b that is administered [in the treatment time period] is about 1.5 micrograms per kilogram of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein per week on a weekly basis for at least twenty-four weeks.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the pegylated interferon alfa-2b is administered on a weekly basis for about forty-eight weeks.

11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered is in an amount that is at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

13. (original) The method of claim 12, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

14. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

15. (original) The method of claim 14, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

16. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

18. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein the therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin to be administered per day is at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight.

20. (original) A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient a therapeutically weight-effective amount of ribavirin of 800 mg/day for a patient having a weight of about 60 to about 65 kg, 1000 mg/day for a patient having a weight in the range of greater than about 65 kg to less than about 85 kg, and 1200 mg/day for a patient having a weight greater than about 85 kg, in association with about 1.5 micrograms per kilogram of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein once a week for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

21. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

22. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

23. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

24. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the treatment time period is about forty weeks to fifty weeks.

25. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

26. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's blood.

27. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

28. (original) The method of claim 20, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

29. (original) A method of treating a patient having chronic hepatitis C infection that comprises administering to the patient at least about 13 mg/kg of the patient's body weight of ribavirin per day in association with about 1.5 micrograms/kg of the patient's body weight of pegylated interferon alfa-2b protein once a week for a treatment time period sufficient to eradicate detectable HCV-RNA and to maintain no detectable HCV-RNA for at least twelve weeks after the end of the treatment time period.

30. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with multiple HCV genotypes.

31. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1.

32. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3.

33. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the treatment time period is at least about twenty-four weeks long.

34. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks long.

35. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

36. (original) The method of claim 35 wherein the treratment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

37. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 1, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

38. (original) The method of claim 37, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

39. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has less than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

40. (original) The method of claim 39, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.

41. (original) The method of claim 29, wherein the patient that has chronic hepatitis C is infected with HCV genotype 2 and/or 3, and wherein the patient has greater than two million copies of hepatitis C virus per milliliter of the patient's serum.

42. (original) The method of claim 41, wherein the treatment time period is about forty-eight weeks.